Underground world of 'cyberpunks' and phone 'phreaks'

By JOHN MARKOFF
New York Times

SAN JOSE — A policeman patrolling after midnight in a Silicon Valley shopping mall recently witnessed an unusual sight, even for this center of high technology: two teen-agers wedged in a phone booth, laboring over the keyboard of a laptop computer clipped into the telephone line.

The youths, who were arrested for telephone fraud and computer abuse and are being held in jail here, belong to a shadowy culture of computer "hackers" committed to illegally entering — and frequently tampering with — the computer networks that American society has come to rely on.

The hackers in this expanding underground have broken into corporate and military computers and tampered with telephone billing and switching equipment, sometimes altering services and monitoring telephone lines.

Some have even boasted of illicitly entering computers used in stock-market trading.

Law enforcement officials say the two young men arrested here — Jonathan O. Yanntis, 18, and Mark W. Derbele, 19, both residents of Washington state — are part of this outlaw culture.

Like Robert T. Morris, the Cornell University graduate student who is said to have written the rogue program that jammed computers around the country last month, they are fascinated with powerful computers and obsessed with the universe created by interconnected networks of machines.

Morris was a sophisticated student whose computer science experiment went awry, his friends have said.

In contrast, Yanntis and Derbele represent the spread of high-tech mischief from college whiz kids to a broader group of teen-agers and young adults.

"A new world has opened up that is hidden, dangerous, important and explorable," said Stewart Brand, an author who is considered an expert on countercultures. "The combination has got to be irresistible."

The hackers themselves, as well as some social scientists, have begun to use a new term, "cyberpunk," to describe the members of this underground.

It is a reference to a popular science fiction genre that deals with an intersecting world of high technology and outlaw society.

"This is a case of art driving reality," said Paul Saffo, a social scientist at the Institute for the Future, a research organization in Menlo Park.

"You have a small group who is actually doing it, and a large pool that is buying into what they are doing and redefining reality."

Computer scientists are careful to note that not all hackers are malicious. The term originally referred to researchers who were committed to designing advanced computer hardware and software.

Morris' fate now rests in the criminal justice system, but police and prosecutors are taking an increasingly dim view of cyberpunks and other hackers who abuse their computer skills.

"We take this very seriously," said Kenneth S. Rosenblatt, head of the high-technology unit of the Santa Clara County district attorney's office.

He said that in the last year a tougher attitude toward computer hacking by law enforcement officials and corporate security officers had resulted in dozens of arrests.

In a number of cases, "sting" operations were set up in which police and telephone company officials masqueraded as hackers to snare offenders.

The cyberpunks live in a hidden electronic world in which they do not submit to interviews in person.

When they call on the telephone to describe their activities, it is often via a call placed with stolen credit cards, or with illegal technology.

Sometimes the communications are via voice-mail systems, which permit storing and retrieving telephone messages, or anonymous messages posted on electronic "bulletin boards."

"Phreaking is moral," said an 18-year old California hacker who calls himself "Frank Drake" in messages he leaves on the bulletin boards.

"There is no theft involved. It's not theft of services, because this equipment would otherwise be idle."

Frank Drake edits a small newsletter called "W.O.R.M.," which he calls "a magazine for cyberpunks."

It was Frank Drake who telephoned at midnight one day recently and set up a conference call with another person he identified as an East Coast hacker who called himself Thomas.

Thomas described himself as a member of a group named "the Legion of Doom," and said he had recently taken an interest in computers used by banking and investment firms.

He asserted that he had entered several computers used for stock trading applications. He did not describe what he did after entering the computers, nor did he identify the institutions involved.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two University of Southern California students walk together on campus this week

Rape fear grips USC campus

By JUDY FARAH
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A rapist who has attacked two University of Southern California students the last month has caused widespread fear on campus, tempering the thrill of an undefeated football team and a Heisman trophy-contending quarterback.

"It's something we're all thinking about," student body President Phil Clement said this week. "For many people, it's paranoia. Students can't sleep, they're sick to their stomach."

A third sex attack occurred at 3:10 p.m. Friday on the USC campus, but police Lt. Pete Durham said the rape was unrelated to two other rapes reported this month. The attacker didn't resemble the man in the other rapes, he said.

The tension comes at a time when there should be joy at USC.

The football team has earned a Rose Bowl berth and is undefeated going into Saturday's showdown with undefeated Notre Dame. Quarterback Rodney Peete, who led the team to victory last week over rival UCLA despite a campus outbreak of measles that had put him in the hospital, is a contender for college football's biggest prize, the Heisman Trophy.

Sgt. John Lewis of campus security said there have been four campus-related rapes this year compared to one in 1987. The most recent attacks, Oct. 29 and Nov. 5, are causing the fear.

> "Students can't sleep, they're sick to their stomach."
>
> PHIL CLEMENT, STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

The rapist approached the female victims with a gun as they were getting out of their cars at campus parking structures, then drove them off campus and sexually assaulted them before driving them back to the school.

Police believe the same man was responsible for both attacks, said Los Angeles Detective Dave Grabelski.

"There's a whole lot of fear over there. It's not being blown out of proportion," Grabelski said Tuesday. "The department thought it important enough to take me and my partner off homicide."

USC has 30,000 graduate and undergraduate students who pay $12,000 a year to attend classes on a 150-acre, inner-city campus. Students traditionally have included the scions of many of Southern California's oldest and wealthiest families.

The private institution is also on the fringes of south-central Los Angeles, home to a high crime rate and the city's most notorious street gangs.

That has led to the impression, even among students, that crime is rampant on campus, when actually USC had fewer rapes, assaults and burglaries last year than larger UCLA, which is bordered by upscale Westwood and Beverly Hills, said Clement.

Still, as many as 5,000 whistles have been distributed to women students and some men in case they spot anything unusual, and campus security has posted 24-hour guards at parking structures.

"I heard of cases where women were walking and if someone was just walking behind them, they would scream," said student Kimberly Falk, 19. "We're using the buddy system. For the most part, though, it's not panic."

"I don't like feeling that I need to be watching everywhere I go," said student Susan Han, 18.

No new clues in kidnap

McClatchy News Service

HAYWARD — A 21-year-old ex-convict taken into custody Wednesday in connection with the kidnaping of 9-year-old Michaela Garecht is no longer a suspect in the abduction, police said Friday.

"We still are checking leads, but we have no new clues in the case," Hayward Police Officer Ray Alsdorf said.

A massive foot search with more than 100 officers and sworn personnel is scheduled for Sunday morning, Alsdorf said. The search is to fan out in two wooded, rugged areas — Niles Canyon Regional Park and Garin Regional Park — in hopes of recovering physical evidence.

"Our psychological profile of a suspect in this kind of case leads us to believe he has not traveled far from the kidnap site, and that he has isolated himself in a remote area," Alsdorf said.

Michaela was snatched last Saturday three blocks away from her Hayward home when a man lured her close to his car, witnesses said.

He grabbed Michaela by the waist and forced her into his car in a parking lot of a neighborhood supermarket, according to police. Michaela had gone to the market with another 9-year-old friend, who witnessed the abduction. Michaela's mother, Sharon Garecht, said the girls' parents had forbidden them from leaving their homes alone.

Garecht said the family did not celebrate Thanksgiving Thursday, instead choosing to man phones at the couple's house.

"We've gotten hundreds of calls saying that our daughter is all over the state, from Eureka to San Diego," Garecht said. "The police have told us they have leads, but nothing concrete yet."

She said whenever a call comes in reporting a sighting of a girl resembling Michaela or a sketch of the suspect, "we get our hopes up, and then we get disappointed. Right now, we are in a state of depression.

The Kevin Collins Foundation has distributed more than 250,000 fliers throughout California, displaying Michaela's face and physical description.

BAY/STATE

IN BRIEF

Diver disappears

ISLA VISTA — Divers who searched Friday for a 27-year-old man who failed to return from a snorkeling trip on Thanksgiving morning found no sign of the man, authorities said,.

The solo diver's vehicle was found parked near the beach with his clothes inside and his dive gear missing, said Santa Barbara County sheriff's Deputy Hugo Arnoldi.

Conviction overturned

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal appeals court Friday overturned the mail fraud convictions of former Assemblyman Bruce Young, who was sentenced to prison for his alleged involvement in the Patrick Moriarty fireworks scandal.

Boy missing

Search teams with the Calaveras County Sheriff's Department combed the area around San Andreas most of Friday, failing to find a 12-year-old boy who was last seen Tuesday.

It was the third full day of a search for Tyler Matson, a San Andreas youth who apparently carried out a threat to run away.

Law enforcement officials privately admitted that they were concerned about the boy's safety, because of the cold and snow.

El Nino theory

MENLO PARK — El Nino, the warming of Pacific Ocean waters blamed for droughts, typhoons and storms worldwide, may be caused by undersea volcanic lava flows, says a study by the U.S. Geological Survey.

The lava from rifts in the ocean floor may bring about the dramatic changes in sea temperature, air pressure, winds and currents that characterize the phenomenon, according to the study the current issue of EOS, the publication of the American Geophysical Union.

El Nino caused staggering economic damage on four continents in 1982-83. It occurred again in 1985-86 on a lesser scale.

Shuttle secret

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE — The next space shuttle landing will be closed to public viewing because Atlantis' military mission is classified, NASA said Friday.

"This is pretty standard policy on Department of Defense flights," said Nancy Lovato, a spokeswoman for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Unclaimed fortunes

LOS ANGELES — A couple of Californians out there are millionaires and they may not even know it.

They are the holders of more than $10 million in winning lottery tickets that have yet to be redeemed, including a $4.7 million prize won last June, a $3 million prize won Nov. 16 and two $452,541 prizes won Oct. 22.

The state gives holders of these tickets 180 days to cash them in, then it's all over; the money goes to schools.

The largest unclaimed prize in California lottery history was $3.98 million, won by someone who bought a ticket in San Francisco's Chinatown in 1987. The 20-year annual annuity payments from that winning ticket began rolling into the education fund in July 1987.

Bridge crash

SAN FRANCISCO — Five people were injured Friday when a van crashed into a stalled, empty bus on the rain-slick San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, authorities said.

A California Highway Patrol spokeswoman said the accident occurred between 7:30 and 8 a.m. on the far right lane of the westbound upper deck of the bridge.

Press Democrat news services

Judy Kempler
The Real Estate Advisor

THE HUMAN ELEMENT!

With the increasing use of computers and other types of modern technology, you might think that the real estate industry would someday become completely automated, mechanized and computerized. Perhaps there would no longer be a need for real people to act as real estate brokers and sales agents.

In fact, technological advances have given real estate professionals new tools which speed up the home-buying process by figuring mathematical calculations, identifying suitable properties for buyers, etc.

But computers have one great fault: they're not good listeners. They hear and record information presented to them, but they don't LISTEN!

You see, the trained ear of a true real estate professional listens closely as buyers and sellers express their real estate needs and desires. More than once, a buyer has expressed the strong desire to own a newer, more modern home in the "right" neighborhood only to end up buying a 40-year-old traditional home in an older, established part of town.

The sensitive real estate agent, through long experience and the enjoyment of working with people, is able to "read" clients and customers to the point of knowing and understanding the presence of an unstated need. A computer would never know that the buyer had long envied life in a large older home.

CLIENT DESPERATE: Need 3 Bed, 2 Bath with Fam. Rm. in East Santa Rosa. Call me at Coldwell Banker North – 546-8811 or 526-7195.

California Lines
invites you to a complimentary fashion show Fri. Dec. 2
from 5-7 at
Studio Kafe
418 Mendocino
Modeling by the Julie Nation College
See our unique style in a fun atmosphere
1066 4th St. 542-0592 (Behind 31 Flavors)

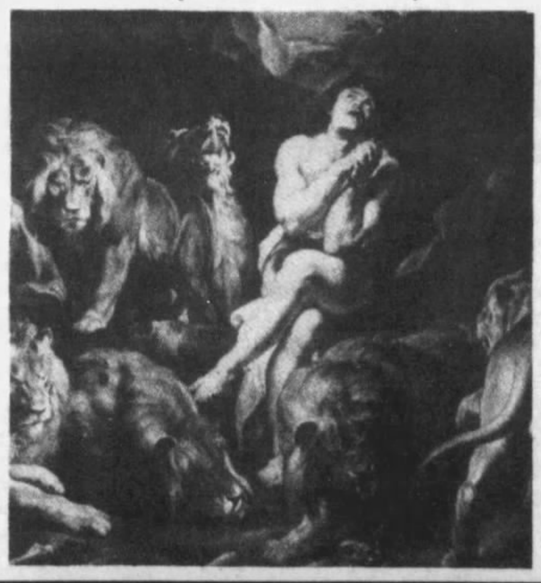
NOW AT YOUR LOCAL HARDWARE STORE

The Silencer™
STOPS Downspout NOISE
STOPS THE "DRIP DRIP" NOISE IN DOWNSPOUTS THAT KEEPS YOU AWAKE AT NIGHT.
FITS IN BOTTOM OF DOWNSPOUT
Guaranteed to Work or your MONEY BACK !!
EASY TO INSTALL • MAGNETIC ATTACHMENT

OR TO ORDER, SEND CHECK OR M.O. FOR $2.50 EACH, POSTAGE INCLUDED TO:
ARKCO PRODUCTS
5533 SONOMA HWY., SANTA ROSA, CA 95409, 707-539-2211

Contrary to conventional wisdom, stress is not a 20th century phenomenon.

The Episcopal Church can't promise an end to stress. But we can promise to help you live better with stress through the love, support and fellowship of Jesus Christ. Come join us this Sunday.



CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
"A FAMILY IN CHRIST WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME"
Luther Burbank Center Chapel
50 Mark West Springs Road

Holy Communion and Christian Education 9:15 Sunday
Child care provided
For More Information Call 538-CALL (2255)